

**BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

In the Matter of the Revocation  
or Suspension of the Educator  
Certificate of Paula C. Wilson  
Certificate # 157059

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**CONSENT ORDER  
OF RETROACTIVE SUSPENSION**

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on May 11, 2004. On July 2, 2003, the State Department of Education (Department) sent a notice of the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina Educator Certificate (certificate) to Paula C. Wilson by certified mail, return receipt requested delivery restricted to addressee. Ms. Wilson received the notice and initially requested a hearing, which was scheduled for March 30, 2003, before John J. Fantry, Jr., Esquire, a hearing officer appointed by the State Board. Through her attorney, Dona L. Guffey, Esquire, Ms. Wilson subsequently agreed with the Department to propose the following resolution of this matter to the State Board in lieu of a hearing: (1) her license will be retroactively suspended from July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004; (2) she will not to accept a teaching position below the ninth grade; (3) she will annually notify the Office of Teacher Certification of the Department by August 15<sup>th</sup> of the location of her teaching position and her grade assignment; (4) she will successfully complete a program or course approved by the Department in anger management by August 1, 2004; (5) if she accepts a teaching position below grade nine her certificate will be subject to automatic suspension without a hearing until she no longer holds such a position; and (6) the retroactive suspension will be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all school districts in South Carolina as a suspension on the grounds of unprofessional conduct. After considering the evidence presented by the Department, the State Board voted to accept the resolution proposed by the parties.

Ms. Wilson holds a valid South Carolina certificate, and has over thirteen years of teaching experience. She holds National Board Certification in Social Studies. During the 2002-2003 school year, she was under contract with Lexington/Richland County School District Five (District) as a sixth grade Social Studies teacher at Crossroads Middle School. Ms. Wilson was placed on administrative leave with pay on May 8, 2003, and later resigned from the District effective with the end of the school year, following an investigation into allegations that she inappropriately disciplined students. Ms. Wilson is accused, according to student statements and parent complaints, of the following types of inappropriate conduct: popping students on the face and back of the head for forgetting homework or for failing to pay attention in class, and poking students with a pencil point or pinching them to get their attention. These alleged acts made one of the students fearful to return to school.

Accepted

Initial Here

Paula C.  
Wilson  
#157059

Ms. Wilson asserts in her defense that she is a very “hands-on, touchy-feely teacher.” She stated that she often patted children on the back for good work. Ms. Wilson also claimed that she would tap a child on their back or the top of their head to get them to pay attention. Ms. Wilson denies her actions were intended to harm or humiliate anyone, but is willing to accept the terms of this order to continue her teaching career. She was successfully employed during the 2003-2004 school year as an Adult Education teacher in Richland County School District Two.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

“The South Carolina State Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (1990). Just cause includes: “Unprofessional conduct,” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (1990); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regulation 43-58 (1992). The State Board finds that the preponderance of the evidence presented by the Department, supports its decision to accept the proposal of the parties to retroactively suspend Ms. Wilson’s teaching certificate from July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004, subject to the additional terms and conditions outlined above.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: /S/ Mary E. Jones

Mary E. Jones

Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

May 11, 2004

I, Paula C. Wilson, SC Teaching Certificate # 157059, do hereby agree to the proposed Order of Retroactive Suspension, consisting of two pages, and understand that this Order will be presented as signed to the State Board of Education on Tuesday, May 11, 2004.

/S/ Paula C. Wilson

Paula C. Wilson

May 3, 2004

Date